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The Hobbesian Case for Multilateralism

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Abstract

The paper presents the Hobbesian case for multilateralism by combining a text analytical critique of Hobbes' argument in favor of the Leviathan with its reassessment in a new security environment. The analysis shows that Hobbes' premises are complex and lead to conclusions that differ from the realist as well as from the world-state position, both attributed to Hobbesian logic in IR theory. A strict application of the Hobbesian argument in today's security context leads to a rationale of multilateral institution building among states. In the first part of the paper, the internationalist analogy in the concept of war of all against all is uncovered and analyzed in relation to the security dilemma, domestic analogy, and methodological individualism. Part II reassesses the Hobbesian security rationale in a new security environment which is assumed to be shaped by transnational terrorism and nuclear WMD.

0. Introduction

This paper argues in favor of multilateralism from a Hobbesian standpoint. The position defended differs from the view that the Hobbesian argument in the *Leviathan* offers a rationale of the international anarchic system. Hobbes' thesis that without common power there is no law and no injustice is indeed at the basis of a secular justification of the modern state. But his remarks on international relations are very brief and their understanding often requires conjectural reasoning in a wider theoretical context (Gauthier 1969: 207-12). It is therefore not surprising that some interpret the Hobbesian position on international relations in accordance with the realist paradigm of international anarchy (e.g. Waltz 1959; Morgenthau 1967; Smith 1986; Bull 1977; 1981; Vincent 1981), while others see in Hobbes' argument in favor of the *Leviathan* a rationale for a world state.¹ The realists see the existence of independent, armed, and potentially dangerous states as an irreducible, quasi-ontological fact (Willms 1989). The overarching paradigm is Hobbes' influential remark that, due to lack of common power, the states exist in an anarchical state of "gladiators" (Hobbes 1962: 115). In this paper, I will first analyze the Hobbesian argument and show that Hobbes' premises are complex and that the conclusions that have to be drawn from them differ from the anarchistic as well as from the world-state position. I will argue that a strict application of Hobbesian methodology leads to a rationale of multilateral cooperation and institution building among states to the utmost possible degree.

The rejection of a territorial world *Leviathan* is based on the evidence that, to create a zone of peace, it suffices that all states evolve into democratic states and that they cooperate through multilateral institutions. Liberal democratic states need no *Leviathan* to keep the peace among them, but they do need multilateral institutions that govern their interdependence. Multilateralism is understood as cooperation of two or more states according to generalized principles of conduct. Credible commitment is established and cooperation stabilized by interlinked und functionally differentiated institutions which combine national, intergovernmental and supranational decision making or dispute settlement procedures (Ruggie 1993; Caporaso 1993; Cheneval 2006). There are of course many functional variations and institutional options of multilateralism that will not be analyzed here (Martin 1993). We only argue in favor of a basic Hobbesian choice for multilateralism. The rationale of multilateralism does not exclude bilateralism. Bilateralism and multilateralism often come as a mix which can be explained rationally. The paper therefore does not argue for multilateralism in opposition to bilateralism. However, it is assumed that the system of peace and security sustained by domestic democracy, fundamental rights, and interdependence

among states cannot be upheld on a unilateral or bilateral basis only. In spheres in which the free rider problem arises, bilateral regulation and enforcement brings about unacceptable transaction costs which multilateralism considerably reduces (Rixen and Rohlfing 2005). The same is true regarding access to information and systemic transparency (Kratochwil 1993). Even intergovernmental military alliances, such as NATO, incorporate multilateral, i.e. generalized, principles of conduct, such as the principle of indivisibility (Weber 1993). The rationale of multilateral governance argued for in this paper also agrees with the reassessment of the role of sovereignty in a new system of close interdependence (Keohane 1995). But unlike authors stressing the “self-defeating nature” of Hobbes’ thought (Keohane 1995: 167-171), this article proposes a different reading: Hobbesian realism actually supports the basic choice of multilateralism. Noel Malcolm (2002: 432-456) has shown that the realists invoking the authority of Hobbes miss the point that Hobbes’ general concept of international relations is one of cooperation and interaction between states at many levels. I agree with this finding, but will show that some problems in the standard version of the argument have to be brought to light and avoided in order to make the Hobbesian point in favor of multilateralism in a coherent manner.

Besides exegetical and conceptual adaptations, an additional condition to the Hobbesian case in favor of multilateralism is put forward. In our times, the Hobbesian argument has to be reassessed in a security environment that is considerably different from the one known to Hobbes. Nuclear capacity with second strike capability and the networks of transnational terrorism influence the way that we can shape the Hobbesian security rationale (Kavka 1987). The increasing possibility for states, independent of size, to annihilate each other with WMDs changes some of the empirical assumptions of the Hobbesian argument. Furthermore, the phenomenon of transnational terrorism reduces the security that states can guarantee to their citizens by controlling territory. The states’ control of their own territory has to be complemented by close transnational cooperation of territorial police, intelligence, and judicial authorities. The monopoly of power over a territory is no longer a reasonably sufficient guarantee for security. States have to seek a maximum of institutionalized cooperation in order to fulfill the security needs of the mobile and rational human individual.

The two most important points of the complex text analytical part of the paper are the following: First, it will be shown that Hobbes draws his premise that no common power leads to a war of all against all from his image of international relations. He transposes this conception to a fictional state of nature among human individuals and concludes the rationality and necessity of a common state power. Thus, the argument in favor of the

monopoly of power among individuals who are all considered being at war with each other has to be checked against the fact that, in reality, human individuals always confront each other in groups and hardly ever as totally separated individuals. Hypothetical individualization is of course possible for the sake of counterfactual argumentation. Hobbes argument is in deed hypothetical, but his counterfactual hypothesis is the lack of common power among individuals. The proposition that the lack of common power leads to a war of all against all is an empirical affirmation of a causal relation. Unlike the “no common power” hypothesis per se, the causal claim that no common power leads to war of all against all does not have the status of a pure hypothesis in Hobbes’ argument. He gives empirical evidence for it. Since the position arguing that lack of common power leads to a war of all human individuals against all human individuals is highly unrealistic, it comes as no surprise that Hobbes tries to make his causal statement plausible by an internationalist analogy: states have no common power, that is why they have standing armies, border guards and are all in a posture of war with each other. But this is a consequence of the existence of sovereign states of a certain kind combined with the absence of common power among them. Therefore it cannot be a presupposition in a general justification of the state for human individuals. The war of all against all that really has to be avoided is the war among sovereign states and/or the war among factions, groups, etc. There is thus a necessity for state building but also for political institution building beyond the level of any particular human collective, be it a faction in the state or a state.

This point is reinforced by giving attention to a second problem in Hobbes’ argument: Hobbes changes from a security rationale taking the perspective of the rational human individual to a collective security rationale from the point of view of the state. The anarchic situation among states is acceptable for states because the latter are defined as political entities that can survive in such an environment. But the point is that this environment is not acceptable for human individuals who are not free from fear of international war and who have no guarantee of safe movement in an international anarchic system. The relocation of the Hobbesian rationale in the point of view of the human individual triggers therefore an imperative for institution building among and above states to the utmost possible degree.

The paper is divided in two parts. Part I presents the textual and logical analysis of the different aspects of the Hobbesian argument just mentioned. It starts with an analysis of the concept of the state of nature which is at the basis of the Hobbesian argument (I.1). In the following sections, two aspects of Hobbes’ justification of the state are uncovered: the internationalist origin of the concept of war of all against all (I.2) and the shift from an

individualistic to a collective security rationale in the rejection of the imperative to overcome the state of nature among states (I.3). Part II reassesses the Hobbesian security rationale in a new security environment. A first paragraph is dedicated to the phenomenon of the trans-territorialization of threat by terrorism and the cooperative institutional approach needed to respond to this phenomenon in order to meet the security interests of sedentary and mobile individuals (II.1). The second paragraph discusses the consequences of nuclear WMD and asks if the equality of states in mutual assured destruction (MAD) by nuclear second strike capability is comparable to the Hobbesian equality among individuals conceived as ability of all to kill each other (II.2). The third paragraph (II.3) summarizes the rationale of multilateralism and argues that a world state is not necessary in the context of a security environment of liberal peace and not possible in other realistic scenarios. At the end, the Hobbesian argument in favor of multilateral cooperation is summarized (III).

I. Analysis of the Hobbesian Rationale of the State and International System

I.1. Variations of the State of Nature

Before approaching Hobbes argument in more detail, it is helpful to see that “state of nature”, a key concept in his argument, is analytical only with regard to the condition of absence of common power. Given further determinations, the concept actually divides into four different understandings, following a formal and material distinction. Formally, a historical/empirical understanding has to be distinguished from a hypothetical understanding of the state of nature (Boucher 1998: 145-157). Secondly, the state of nature may be conceived as a state of innocence and/or societal peace, at least in its original form. It may also be portrayed as a state of war. The formal and material distinctions of state of nature can be combined with each other so that we actually find four conceptions of the state of nature: as a historical state of war, as a hypothetical state of war, as a historical state of peace, and as a hypothetical state of peace. Further, there is a possibility of conceiving war as a war of all individuals against all individuals, or of peace of all individuals with all individuals. On the other hand, there is a state of war between collectives (groups, states, hords, factions, etc), or its peaceful equivalent. These possibilities can again be conceived as either hypothetical or historical:

STATE OF NATURE	hypothetical	Historical
Sn _{war/individ}	Sn _{war/individ/hyp}	Sn _{war/indiv/hist}

SN _{war/coll}	SN _{war/coll/hyp}	SN _{war/coll/hist}
SN _{peace/indiv}	SN _{peace/indiv/hyp}	SN _{peace/indiv/hist}
SN _{peace/coll}	SN _{peace/coll/hyp}	SN _{peace/coll/hist}

Hobbes was keen to give empirical evidence for his claim that the state of nature leads to a state of war, ultimately, of all against all. It has been argued that the reference to a negative anthropology in general, civil war, the Amazon women, the Saxon and other German tribes, the paternal communities of Ancient Greece, or the Amerindians have served as historical evidence for the state of nature (Boucher 1998: 157). Hobbes did indeed refer to all of these historical realities as examples of a historical state of nature as state of war. The problem, however, is that none of these examples give evidence of a state of war of all human individuals against all human individuals. In fact, many “primitive” tribes lead a peaceful and cooperative existence in the absence of a centralized Leviathan. Furthermore, civil war is war between limited numbers of factions, not a war of all human individuals against all human individuals. There might be ample evidence for the violent nature of humans, but there is no empirical evidence for a real state of war of all human individuals against all human individuals.

A convincing argument has been made that the Amerindians offered important empirical evidence for the state of nature to 17th and 18th century authors. In the Americas the Europeans actually discovered the historical “state of nature” of earlier times in their contemporary reality (Jahn 1999). But the state of nature they discovered was not a state of war of all human individuals against all human individuals. It was a state of communitarian life or collective struggle. None of the historical examples of the state of nature were examples of a real war of all individuals against all individuals.

It will first be shown that international relations are Hobbes’ empirical reference of a state of nature as state of war of all against all (sn_{war/indiv/hist}). Hobbes replaced the collective individual (state) with the human individual and attributed the characteristics of the system of sovereign states to the situation of human individuals in a state of nature.

I.2. The Internationalist Analogy in Hobbes’ “War of All against All”

As Hobbes writes in the *Dedicatory Letter* of *De cive*, persons relate to each other in two fundamental ways: as citizens of the same state, or as states. In the state they are bound by love, justice, and peace. In the confrontation of states, even the good need to go to war, use

violence and deceit in order to ascertain their safety and survival. In the first case, man is man's God, in the second case, man is man's wolf.²

First, it should be noticed that Hobbes does not say that man as such is man's wolf. Only in the personification of the state and in the confrontation of states is man man's wolf. This is related to the fact that the paradigm "war of all against all" has a statist/internationalist, not an individualist/domestic or general anthropological origin. Only in a second, fictional argument does it get applied to all human individuals. The passage referred to in *De cive* is representative for Hobbes' parallel consideration of the state of nature among human individuals and states. As Hobbes notes, there are no human beings which do not exist under some kind of authority. Those who live without a modern state, like the Amerindians, do not live in a state of war of all against all. Hobbes' state of nature as war of all human individuals against all human individuals is based on a metaphorical transposition of state attributes to individuals. All Hobbes can say about the savages that have no government is that they live in "brutish manner". He does not and cannot claim that they live in a state of war of all individuals against all individuals.³

Hobbes makes the causal claim that the absence of government (state of nature) leads to a state of war of all against all, of constant threat, fear, and violence. But all of this is formulated in the conjunctive form.⁴ However, Hobbes holds that the state of nature among states is not a hypothesis but an empirical reality. He refers to it in order to give empirical evidence for the causal claim that under conditions of absence of common power the relations between actors degenerate into a state of war of "every man against every man".⁵ Hobbes does not conceive the state of nature among individuals first, in order to transpose it to international relations later. He conceives the state of nature as state of war of all against all using international relations as empirical evidence. He then projects the state of war of all against all among sovereign states into the hypothetical state of nature among human individuals. Only after this operation does he arrive at the thesis of a war of all against all among human individuals given the absence of common power. The sovereign state person actually has the negative freedom an individual has in the hypothetical state of nature. The constitution of states without common power leads to an international state of nature which is a state of actual or potential war between armed states. War is thus the price of natural individual freedom, which exists among sovereign state persons and is hypothetically assumed for individuals.⁶ Even when there is no actual war, the absence of common power leads all states to threaten each other by their armies and to spy on each other's strategic intentions (Hobbes 1983: 159).

For illustrative purposes, it is helpful to remember that the paradigm of “war of all against all” has its origin in Plato’s *Laws* where it refers to the state of war of all states against all states. The application to other conflicts is derived from this image and follows later in Plato’s text: “I think he [the legislator] censured the stupidity of ordinary men, who do not understand that they are all engaged in a never-ending lifelong war against all other states ... The legislator’s position would be that what most men call ‘peace’ is really only a fiction, and that in cold fact all states are by nature fighting an undeclared war against every other state”. (Plato. *Laws*, I; 625e-626°, 1970: 47). Three aspects of the analysis just presented can be distinguished:

I.2.1 Problems of Circularity and Ambiguity

In the original concept of war of all against all, the actors are independent states. The key to the understanding of the problematic part of Hobbes argument lies in the transposition of attributes of the state on the human individual. Hobbes argument relies on a metamorphosis of totally independent predatory states into human individuals who then found the state. The logical consequences of this shift of attribution are very important. Hobbes’ argument consisted mainly in the irrationality of the war of all against all in the state of nature and thus the necessity for a common power. But since the empirical reference of the image of a state of nature as state of war of all against all is the relation between sovereign states, the result of the argument, i.e. the necessity of the sovereign independent state, is at the same time the constitutive reason of international relations state of permanent war of all against all. Hobbes thus created a Gordian knot. The more he insisted on sovereignty and independence of the state in order to create civil peace and overcome the hypothetical war of all individuals against all individuals, the more he accentuated the real state of war of all states against all states. The result of the argument, the justification of the independent armed state, is concealed in the presupposition of the war of all against all. Since there is no empirical evidence for a war of all human individuals against all human individuals, the only realistic necessity to form a state is the necessity for collective actors, be they states or factions, to overcome the state of nature among each other.

I.2.2 Evitability of the Security Dilemma?

The hidden internationalist analogy thus explains why Hobbes’ security logic produces a dilemma, called security dilemma by John Herz (1950; 2003). A dilemma is a choice between

two equally undesirable, or a logical consequence of two logically impossible alternatives. A dilemma has no satisfactory solution. Logically this is so because the argument is locked in by the exclusion of a third possibility in the premise (*p* or *non-p*, “tertium non datur”). The solution to a dilemma is only made possible by the change of the premise, opening the way for a third possibility. Transposed to international relations this means the following: Under conditions of anarchy and lack of common power, states can seek their security through armament or without it. If they choose to arm, the uncertainty of their intent to others creates fear which leads others to enhance their military power. The result is a (possibly inadvertent) decrease of security of others (Jervis 1988: 317; Glaser 1992: 506-7) or of all (Lieber 1988: 5; Collins 1997: 12). If the states do not arm, their position is equally insecure because others might take advantage of their presumed weakness. Any of the two possible policies seems unsatisfactory; the consequences are equally negative and unintended by many or by all. In short, the security dilemma turns international relations into a classical tragedy (Collins 1997).

Constructivist theories challenge this account by the argument that social threats are constructed, not naturally given. Whether a security dilemma becomes operational or not depends on the internal nature of the states, the action taken by the states and the interaction between them (Wendt 1992: 405). This is a classical example of “tertium datur”, the solution to a dilemma. To constructivism, the options to arm or not to arm do not constitute a complete disjunction. There are other possibilities of state action. When actors encounter each other for the first time, there is no security dilemma in operation. Both being social constructions, there is neither anarchy nor hierarchy. States can engage in cooperative practices which consolidate trust and create a dynamic interest in peace. Such theories are in fact quite close to Hobbes himself. He presupposes that sovereigns should seek to realize natural law, which is identical with the law of nations, in their conduct of international relations if possible to the utmost possible degree (Hobbes 1962: 260). Natural law is always binding in *foro interno* (conscience). In external relations, it makes sense that men endeavor to realize natural law as far as possible. As elements of such conduct he mentions mutual accommodation or complaisance in order to foster peace and not to become guilty of war, the granting of pardon, abstinence from revenge, guarantee of safe conduct to mediators of peace, submission to arbitrement and avoidance to be judge in one’s own cause (Hobbes 1962: 118-122). International relations can though be constructed by something else than just predatory and counter-predatory behavior, but under conditions of lack of sufficient security the actors have to be prudent and they have the right to opt out from natural law.

The constructivist position has been criticized by pointing to the uncertainty of intent (Collins 1997). States might not necessarily start their relation in the security dilemma, but they get into it because of the *a priori* condition of uncertainty of intent. Nevertheless, how deep the states get into a state of “nature” depends on their actions. This point works in favor of the constructivist argument because the states can choose offensive or defensive weaponry, allow weapons inspections by supranational agencies, delegate the condition of possibility to make war and the informational expertise to supranational agencies, prove their motives through other confidence building measures, exercise self-restraint through internal democratic government, and/or rely on general communicative rationality (for the latter see Risse 2000; Mitzen 2005). In other words, the states can avoid the conditions of anarchy and of informational uncertainty. This solution, however, needs further qualification.

According to Collins (2004: 35), a system-induced security dilemma, a state-induced security dilemma, and an imperialist security dilemma can be distinguished, whereby uncertainty is common to all. The system-induced security dilemma is based on the general conditions of anarchy or lack of common power, creating a climate of uncertainty among inoffensive status quo powers with tragic, i.e. negative consequences unintended by all. As mentioned above, there are many solutions for status quo powers to get out of the system-induced security dilemma. By creating networks of mutually managed interdependence which are not themselves closed and territorial in the sense of the modern state, multilateralism leads out of the system-induced security dilemma without reproducing it on a higher level among ever greater Leviathans. The state-induced security dilemma applies if a hegemonic state actually requires the insecurity of others and thereby creates uncertainty (Snyder 1985). Collins sees the solution to this version of the security dilemma in combining threats and concessions to alter the hegemon’s requirements that others are insecure without challenging its dominant position. The imperialist security dilemma is state induced. However, the state in question is not a hegemon but a powerful revisionist aggressor who challenges the status quo and does not accept concessions nor react to threat. Whatever the further implications might be, two points are clear. A constructivist approach notwithstanding, for status quo states it is much more complex to escape from state induced security dilemma and from imperialist security dilemma than from a system induced security dilemma among each other. Secondly, in order to escape from the security dilemma’s common feature of uncertainty it is not sufficient to escape from system-induced security dilemma, one also has to escape from state-induced and the imperialistic security dilemma.

The internationalist origin of Hobbes' argument for the Leviathan offers an explanation why the security dilemma occurs in Hobbesian realism: the states are created by individuals who are presupposed to behave like revisionist imperialistic states in the imperialistic security dilemma. The system-induced security dilemma and the possibilities of constructing a different social reality of international relations are being short-circuited by the metamorphosis of predatory states into human individuals and, subsequently, predatory human individuals into predatory states. Hobbes generalized a state of affairs that is not general, but that is never the less quite real. Status quo states can overcome the system-induced security dilemma among themselves and govern their relations by institution building based on the law of nature, but they cannot easily overcome the security dilemma induced by imperialistic and revisionist third states. However, facing this reality, they can institutionalize and stabilize cooperation and thereby avoid the costs of the system-induced security dilemma among themselves, and they can join forces and create an effective multilateral system that diminishes the general incentives for hegemony and imperialism.

I.2.3. The Domestic Analogy is not Domestic

The proposed reading of Hobbes also leads to the need for a revision of the understanding of the domestic analogy as interpreted by the realist tradition (Bull 1977: 45-6; Suganami 1989). The domestic analogy has been explained by Ch. Bottici (2003) as an equality of relationships: the relation of states in international relations is to be seen in analogy to the relation of individuals in the domestic realm. Bottici identifies three conditions of applicability of the analogy: First, the acceptance of sovereignty as distinctive trait of state actors. This difference keeps the analogy an analogy. If the domestic and international realms were identical, analogical reasoning would be inadequate (Kratowchwil 1993: 464). Second: the possibility of extension of knowledge and experience of individuals in domestic society to the relation between states. For instance, the conditions of peace and justice in international relations are presumed to be conceivable by transposing parts of the experience of state-building to the international realm. Third: the existence of a significant number of similarities between the two domains.

This analysis has shown that in a Hobbesian rationale of international relations the domestic analogy is preceded by an internationalist analogy. The paradigm for the state of war of all against all under anarchy, overcome through state-building, is the relation between sovereign states. In Hobbes, the domestic and international realities and the human and state individuals have been largely interchanged. This point does not undermine normative and

methodological individualism as such. But it does reveal that a Hobbesian domestic analogy relies on a hidden internationalist analogy. The internationalist analogy, on the other hand, is not adequate for individualistic contractarianism, because the war of all human individuals against all human individuals is unrealistic. It can be hypothesized, but what good is an unrealistic hypothesis? What seems sensible, though, is the analogy of the confrontation of states with each other with the confrontation of factions in civil war. Both require adequate domestic and multilateral institution building to overcome the conditions leading to general insecurity for individuals. Granted, the “quality” of the international state of nature depends on the nature of the sovereigns. Some will seek to implement natural law and are thus not predatory. They also keep internal societal order and thereby change the nature of the external order among societies. But insofar as Hobbes relies on the worst case scenario of predatory sovereigns who are in a posture of war against each other and transposes this worst case scenario to human individuals, he exchanges the domestic analogy for an internationalist analogy.

While it is true that the state of nature as state war of all human individuals against all human individuals lacks empirical evidence, it is equally true that a civil war of a limited number of factions creates a state of insecurity for all human individuals. This state of insecurity for all does not require the hypothesis of a war of all against all and empirical evidence can easily be found to confirm it. Couldn't Hobbes' argument be adapted accordingly: The state of nature being a state of insecurity for all requires a social contract that establishes civil peace? This argument is convincing and supports the point: The international state of nature leads to a state of insecurity for all human individuals as they are living in a system where war is constantly possible and free movement of individuals is insecure. The creation of a monopoly of state power is therefore not a sufficient measure to overcome the state of insecurity of all.

I.3. Switching from an Individual to a Collective Security Rationale

In *De cive*, Hobbes clearly states that he who claims to want to remain in the state of nature contradicts himself.⁷ Hobbes does not apply this to citizens of different states and states. The imperative to overcome the state of nature by a social contract is not as unconditional as Hobbes suggests when he refers to the self-defeating character of the state of nature. He only justifies a brotherhood of arms, structured internally in such a way as to oppose enemies. The equality of human individuals as equal capacity to kill each other (Hobbes 1983: 45) is being modified by the foundation of the state. With fellow citizens there is justified hope to

conserve life and property; in the state of nature this seems impossible.⁸ With a sufficient number of fellow citizens there is hope for the survival of the collective and in the collective.⁹ Interstate war is seen as a controlled action following formal rules.¹⁰ Certainly the lesser evil when compared to the wars of gangs and warlords (Gover 1989: 80). Hobbes thinks that international war is conducive for state-building and virtue.¹¹ On the level of international relations, Hobbes gives his individualistic security rationale a collectivist turn. He holds that it is sufficient to enter in a contract with some. This leads to common strength to oppose other collectives.¹²

If Hobbes were to apply the same individualistic security logic to the domestic and international realm, and if he conceded that real war is always among states or collectives, he would have to say that citizens of different states (or members of different collectives) willing to stay in a state of nature with each other contradict themselves. If one applies the original logic of Leviathan, i.e. one argues strictly from the point of view of the human individual as a rational actor seeking conditions of survival, the imperative to overcome or avoid the state of nature among states and among citizens of different states applies. It is obvious that, while acceptable for some states under some conditions, the international state of nature is not acceptable for human individuals, especially when they are considered as transnationally mobile. The international state of nature leaves the human individual in fear of death in international war and in fear of death or uncertain protection as mobile agent. From a strictly individualistic point of view, the international state of nature does not fulfill the condition of sufficient security. If we give Hobbes argument an individualistic turn back to the human individual, this triggers a rational imperative to overcome the state of nature among states and citizens of different states as far as possible. This brings the Hobbesian logic based on natural right in line with his constructivist approach regarding the realization of natural law in international relations.

II. The Hobbesian Argument in a New Security Environment

In this section it is shown that the imperative to multilateralism following from a reshaped Hobbesian argument is reinforced in the new security environment. Hobbesian realism was part of an early modern reality when “war made the state, and the state made war” (Tilly 1975: 42). His reluctance to challenge the international state of nature has to be interpreted within a context before world wars, long range WMD, massive bombardments of civilians, suicidal transnational terrorism, possibly with WMD. Wars of the highly industrialized world

and transnational terrorism bring about a state of insecurity for states and individuals, unheard of at the time of Hobbes. Today, even times of peace and democratic stability in a good number of states are times of high insecurity. L. F. Richardson's seminal "Variation of the Frequency of Fatal Quarrels with Magnitude" (1948: 523-46; 1960) falsified Hobbes' argument that it is always beneficial to trade off frequent civil war against less frequent interstate war. If wars increase in severity by a factor of ten, they occur less frequently only with a factor of three. This confirms Rousseau's argument against Hobbes that the world becomes a more dangerous place if mankind only goes half way and creates sovereign states without going further to creating a federative system among them (Rousseau 1964: 604). Moreover, transnational terrorism brings insecurity into stable democratic states even in the absence of interstate or civil war. Transnational terrorism spreads according to its own laws (i.e. neither territorial contiguity, nor state alignment) and breaks a conflict into violent events of low or high severity and frequency creating a general state of insecurity (Pearlstein 2004).

II.1 Trans-territorial Threat

Facing terrorism under advanced technological conditions of communication and mobility, people are unsafe in their democratic homeland, even in the absence of interstate and civil war. Given mobility and economic interdependence, the vital interests of a state and its citizens may also be damaged abroad, on the territory of another country. Just like anarchy might be too vague a concept to explain particular wars (Cederman 2003: 145), so civil order in the powerful Leviathan is not a sufficient condition for particular security. The crucial question from a radically Hobbesian point of view is if this state of insecurity for all is sufficiently overcome by the existence of the territorial sovereign state. Facing global terrorism, the existence of a certain number of stable, decent, and even democratic states seems to be a necessary but not a sufficient condition for internal security.

If it is true that in our times the state of insecurity for all within a given territory is not sufficiently overcome by the existence of the territorial state – the contested term "war on terror" against an enemy outside and inside state borders seems to indicate just that –, then Hobbes' pragmatic and statist reasons not to submit classical internationalism to the individualistic, and consequently multilateral, logic of political institution building no longer hold the same weight. This in turn means that the logical form of the original individualistic argument of the social contract is again relevant: from an individualistic point of view, the international state of nature which perpetuates a state of insecurity for all individuals is self-contradictory or at least highly problematic. While the states prevail, individuals remain or are

increasingly unsafe. In the age of global terrorism and the sovereign importance of movement, states need to cooperate very closely in order to assure better individual security within their territory (Barthelmess 2002). In Hobbesian terms, they should not just respect natural law, but they should follow reason in forming institutional frameworks leading to a higher degree of security.

II.2 Egalitarian Consequences of WMD?

In the early stages of nuclear armament, Bertrand Russell applied Hobbes' concept of sovereignty through domination to international relations (Russell 1945: 541). Given the nuclear monopoly of the USA at that time, he considered a nuclear blackmail or annihilation of the Soviet Union and any other power opposed to American world government. Russell reluctantly contemplated to "save the world" and end the international state of anarchy by nuclear imperialism of the USA: "There is one thing and only one which could save the world, and that is a thing which I should not dream of advocating. It is, that America should make war on Russia during the next two years, and establish a world empire by means of the atomic bomb."¹³

As the USSR developed second strike capability, some argued that the conditions of MAD made it necessary to apply Hobbes' concept of rational consensus and equality to the states that now had the capability of totally destroying each other. It would therefore be rational for all states to abandon nuclear weapons and to submit all nuclear capacity to a common civil authority, just like the European powers have submitted the industries of coal and steel to the European Coal and Steel Community after World War II. This has not (yet) become reality and the powers seem to have a collective action problem. The explanation that has been given is that the Hobbesian model is a retrospective genetic explanation, inadequate to serve as a decision making tool or to predict prospective collective action (Kavka 1987). Daniel Farrell argued that also under strict rationality conditions the nuclear powers have no real interest to submit to a common supranational authority, not even under conditions of MAD (Farrell 1989: 64-77). He conceived the equality of states as a traditional balance of power and therefore did not think that MAD leads to a fundamentally new situation (1989: 68-9). Farrell did not work with Hobbes' concept of equality as equal ability to annihilate. Second strike capability however creates equality between states in the sense of equal capability to annihilate. Equality according to Hobbes means that everybody can annihilate everybody.

MAD has lead nuclear powers, democratic or non-democratic, not to attack each other and, with limited success, to keep others from developing nuclear arms. It can thus be argued that MAD assures peace among rationally behaving powers with nuclear second strike capability. It can also be argued that MAD is not really comparable to Hobbes' concept of equality among individual human beings, because the individual is, in most cases, not able to strike back before being killed. There is no possibility of a MAD among individuals. In this sense, the comparison between MAD and Hobbesian equality is inadequate. However, three further arguments have to be considered: 1) It is contradictory to argue for non-submission to a supranational nuclear authority in the name of the peace keeping consequences of MAD (a) and at the same time prohibit nuclear proliferation (b). According to (a), states can argue (or reason in secrecy) that they have to join the countries with nuclear second strike capability in order to assure security and peace. 2) A stabilized state of MAD, ideally assuring peace, has to be distinguished from the dangerous consequences of the race to obtain atomic weapons, driven by the desire to obtain "nuclear sovereignty". This race can drive states into war as they preemptively try to hinder other states from obtaining nuclear weapons, or as they try to reach other objectives by military means before the enemy state has obtained the possibility to reply to attack with nuclear weapons. 3) The third argument considers the possible proliferation of nuclear weapons to suicidal terrorists. This argument might be somewhat more difficult to uphold due to the complicated technology involved. But there can be scenarios in which suicidal terrorists get technological cooperation from rogue states. These three arguments show that it does not suffice to point to the peaceful consequences of an ideal state of MAD in order to argue against the general abolition of nuclear weapons and submission of all nuclear activity to a civil supranational authority. The lack to do so might result in disaster and, under conditions of interdependence, is unacceptable for any self-interested rational individual or state.

II.3 Why Multilateralism and not a World-Leviathan

The overcoming the "state of nature" among states implies the necessity of multilateralism but not of a world-Leviathan. As has been said, multilateralism can be understood as functionally differentiated constitution of incongruent territorial hierarchies through institutionalized cooperation and integration between states. The multilateral process blends domestic and intergovernmental structures through their linkage to supranational modes of decision-making, dispute settlement, and jurisdiction. Today, multilateralism is a geographically limited network of overlapping and territorially incongruent organizations, not

an overarching global system. In the world at large, it coexists with traditional international or statist structures, with feedback loops of sub-state or ethnic fragmentation, with failed states or with the total absence of modern statehood. The global application and the “finality” of multilateralism is uncertain. But as a process towards a more comprehensive transnational guarantee of peace, security, rule of law, individual autonomy through increased possibility of transnational movement we can consider multilateralism a systemic necessity of modern society. It is the adequate choice of the rational human individual. With regard to new threats it is increasingly difficult for states to maintain a level of sufficient security without cooperation. The security perspectives of individuals and states begin to coincide in showing the necessity of multilateral institution building beyond the state level: “Networked threats require a networked response” (Slaughter 2005: 36).

Multilateralism guarantees increased security through shared responsibility between domestic, intergovernmental, and supranational institutions. It is therefore not a process of reproduction of the unitary state at a higher level. This also implies that multilateralism does not reproduce the security-dilemma at a higher level. Neither is it a process of territorial monopolization of power, but of limited, differentiated delegation of competence to supranational agents and of intergovernmentalism in the areas where states cooperate but retain full or shared decision-making power. States, especially the powerful ones, continue to be the single most important political actors. However, many of them pursue some of their goals through negative integration (differentiated abolition of tariffs, border control), differentiated delegation of competence to supranational dispute settlement, regulatory agents and, in the case of the EU, even to legislative bodies. Overall, sovereignty remains important. But sovereignty and the traditionally unitary and holistic character of borders are being unbundled (Ruggie 1993a, p. 164). Borders and decision-making powers are increasingly differentiated and reconnected at the intergovernmental level leading to institutional forms of non-unitary political and legal authority. Multilateralism presupposes state-building as it is initiated and carried out by states. But multilateralism also helps state-building and economic development as the perspectives of joining multilateral institutions offers incentives for political and economic reforms leading to more stable statehood (Fierke and Wiener 1999; Vachudova 2001; Schimmelfennig/Engert/Knobel 2003). This can be done successfully already by small number of states forming core groups (Kahler 1993).

The point against the world state on Hobbesian grounds can be argued on the basis of the comments made on the security dilemma and in the light of the theory of democratic or liberal peace. According to the theory of liberal peace, it is rational from an individualistic

point of view that states seek increased economic interdependence and govern this interdependence through multilateral institutions of mutual recognition and credible commitment. With regard to the state-induced and imperialistic security dilemmas it has been argued that they leave the status quo powers with no options than to cooperate with each other and to engage in collective security measures against non-status quo powers. If all powers are status-quo powers, the world would be left with a system-induced security dilemma that can be dealt with on the basis of multilateralism. Democratic state building and multilaterally governed interdependence of democratic states offer a sufficient guarantee for security among status quo powers. The theory of democratic or liberal peace has to be understood correctly to make this point clear. There is a consensus that the hypothesis of democratic peace can be upheld empirically if the combination of three elements is given: 1) representative democracy; 2) guarantee of basic human rights; 3) transnational interdependence (Doyle 2005). Several empirical analyses have tested if every single element in isolation is a sufficient explanation for peace. The result is clear: If the elements are not realized in combination, the hypothesis of democratic peace can be falsified (Rosato 2003). Only the triadic variation of hypothesis of democratic or liberal peace can be upheld (Russett and O'Neill 2001; Doyle 2005). This variation considers "multilateralized" states which, in addition to their internal democratic system, respect universal human rights and are part of a complex system of interdependence. Both, the human rights system and the functional systems of interdependence are upheld and managed by multilateral institutions. The "zone of peace" of the democratic OECD world is a zone not only of individual democratic states existing next to each other, but of a highly complex web of multilateral institutions which create, uphold, and manage human rights regimes and regimes of functional interdependence. As long as this situation is not global and large zones of conflict and arbitrary rule persist, the world state is possible only at the rationally unacceptable cost of "bellum maximum", as 18th century cosmopolitan thought has already brought to light (Cheneval 2005: 226). If all or most states were stable democracies forming a multilateral and interdependent world, the world state would no longer be necessary since peace and security are sustained realities among interdependent liberal democratic states interconnected via multilateral institutions. In nutshell, the conditions that make the world state possible are at the same time conditions that make it unnecessary.

III. Conclusion: The Multilateral Logic of Hobbesian Realism

We have first argued that Hobbes' rational justification of the state and international system is complex. In his argument, the causal affirmation that no common power leads to a war of all

against all is taken from the evidence of international reality. It is transposed to domestic reality where it serves to justify a strong central state to check predatory individuals. However, the real state of war that threatens the security of individuals is always a state of war among collectives, a situation which the sheer formation of sovereign states perpetuates. To this reflection we added a second analytical element showing that, in his international thought, Hobbes switches from an individualistic to a statist security rationale which does not sufficiently address the security concerns of human individuals, especially not in a context of transnational mobility. The anarchic system of states is rationally unacceptable to human individuals in the case of available options of multilateral cooperation among states. The Hobbesian imperative is thus that states ought to go as far as they possibly can in establishing a multilateral zone of peace which guarantees individual security. This imperative has always been included in Hobbes' natural law. But we have shown that it is also the result of a security calculus within the realm of natural right.

The new security environment, mainly shaped by transnational terrorism and WMD, reinforces the understanding of the Hobbesian argument in its more coherent form and to pursue the security rationale from the point of view of the rational human individual. The unilateral insisting on national security and national interest of any state only ties the Gordian knot of the international war of all against all a little tighter. In the age of long range WMD and transnational terrorism the international state of "nature" becomes definitely unacceptable. The threats are such that they cannot be dealt with by an internal contract and unilateral posture of war towards the rest of the world. It goes without saying that under terrorist threat domestic order through the rule of law and law enforcement remains of primordial importance. However, it is insufficient if it is not backed by a system of close cooperation among states and the abolition of the conditions of possibility of elementary threat. Terrorism can be regarded as the trans-territorialization of war, threatening even strong states asymmetrically. Asymmetric threat means that not the state as such is threatened, but that its citizens are highly unsafe. Countries traditionally safe due to their power and strategic position are vulnerable unless their security is guaranteed at home and abroad. Technology has increased the possible harm that can be afflicted on people by individuals. Economic interdependence, world trade, globalized tourism and business all lead to the fact that a state's interests and citizens can be threatened more easily at home and abroad. The nation-state-Leviathan offers no sufficient shield against this threat even if it goes to its limits to guarantee a maximum of internal and border security.

The Leviathan controlling the world by a central state remains undesirable and ultimately unnecessary. The building of ever more powerful and larger states does not overcome but reproduce the security dilemma on ever higher scales. In order to achieve security for states and mobile individuals there is thus no realistic alternative to integrated forms of legislation and law enforcement through mechanisms of shared and unbundled sovereignty and coordinated political authority of different states. When centered on the human individual's interest for security and survival, Hobbes' argument suggests a multilaterally stabilized system of security and interdependence that goes well beyond the homeland.

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¹ Russell 1945: 541: "Every argument that he [Hobbes] adduces in favour of government, in so far as it is valid at all, is valid in favour of international government". See Hungerland 1989: 35-50; Mohrs 1995: 257-401.

² Hobbes 1983: 24: „To speak impartially, both sayings are very true; *That Man to Man is a kind of God; and that Man to Man is an arrant Wolfe*: The first is true, if we compare Citizens amongst themselves; and the second, if we compare Cities. In the one, there's some analogie of similitude with the Deity, to wit, Justice and Charity, the twin-sisters of peace. But in the other, Good men must defend themselves by taking to them for a Sanctuary the two daughters of War, Deceit and Violence“.

³ Hobbes 1962: 101: "It may peradventure be thought, there was never such a time, nor condition of war as this; and I believe it was never generally so, over all the world: but there are many places where they live so now. For the savage people in many places of America ... have no government at all; and live at this day in that brutish manner, as I said before”.

⁴ Hobbes 1962: 101: "Howsoever, it may be perceived what manner of life there would be, where there were no common power to fear, by the manner of life, which men that have formerly lived under a peaceful government, use to degenerate into, in a civil war”.

⁵ "But though there had never been any time, wherein particular men were in a condition of war one against another; yet in all times, kings, and persons of sovereign authority, because of their independency, are in continual jealousies, and in the state and posture of gladiators; having their weapons pointing, and their eyes fixed on one another; that is, their forts, garrisons, and guns upon the frontiers of their kingdoms; and continual spies upon their neighbors; which is a posture of war. ...To this war of every man, against every man, this also

is consequent; that nothing can be unjust. The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice have there no place. Where there is no common power, there is no law.” (Hobbes 1962: 115).

⁶ “The liberty, whereof there is so frequent and honourable mention ... is not the liberty of particular men; but the liberty of the commonwealth: which is the same with that which every man then should have, if there were no civil laws, nor commonwealth at all. And the effects of it also be the same. For as amongst masterless men, there is perpetual war, of every man against his neighbour ... so in states, and commonwealths not dependent on one another, every commonwealth, not every man, has an absolute liberty, to do what it shall judge, that is to say, what that man, or assembly that representeth it, shall judge most conducing to their benefit. But withal, they live in the condition of a perpetual war, and upon the confines of battle, with their frontiers armed, and cannons planted against their neighbors round about.” (Hobbes 1962: 162).

⁷ “Whosoever therefore holds, that it had been best to have continued in that state in which all things were lawfull for all men, he contradicts himself; for every man, by naturall necessity desires that which is good for him: nor is there any that esteems a war of all against all, which necessarily adheres to such a State, to be good for him “. (Hobbes 1983: 49-50).

⁸ “there is no man who can hope by his own strength, or wit, to defend himself from destruction, without the help of confederates”. (Hobbes 1962: 115).

⁹ “It is therefore necessary, to the end the security sought for may be obtained, that the number of them who conspire in a mutuall assistance be so great, the the accession of some few to the enemies party may not prove to them a matter of moment sufficient to assure the victory”. (Hobbes 1983 : 86). See also Hobbes 1962: 130.

¹⁰ “And we mean such a war as is of all men against all men; such as is the meer state of nature; although in the warre of nation against nation a certain mean was wont to be observed“ (Hobbes 1983: 86).

¹¹ “they uphold thereby, the industry of their subjects; there does not follow from it, that misery, which accompanies the liberty of particular men” (Hobbes 1962: 101). See McPherson 1962: 104.

¹² “And so it happens that through feare of each other we think it fit to rid our selves of this condition, and to get some fellows; that if there needs must be war, it may not yet be against all men, nor without some helps”. (Hobbes 1983 : 50).

¹³ Letter from Russel to Gamel Brenan, 1 Sept 1945, quoted in Lippincott 1990: 21.